In Turnbull S-5 (1951-1958) 1962 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

One of them, a youth called Kenge, had even become bugler at the Animal Station, where almost every hour the air was shattered with attempts at military bugle calls.

Kenge's father had died a number of years ago, when he was just a boy. His mother had returned to her village, but Kenge had stayed around Camp Putnam. Pat Putnam encouraged him to become a jack-of-all-trades, and Kenge had come to spend more time at the camp than in the forest. He even learned the work of hotel boy, such as pressing clothes for Putnam's guests. He wore shorts and shirt, meticulously scrubbed and pressed with the Camp Putnam flatiron, but usually without buttons. He was very sophisticated and a little conceited, but a good friend to me at all times, and eventually he made himself indispensable.

During my last trip Kenge had been with me practically the whole time; since no women were allowed in the initiation camp, he helped with the cooking, and he had told me how to behave. He tried to interpret my questions to the others, for he had a better idea than most Pygmies of the peculiar sorts of things that Europeans want to know. Such things to an African are often forbidden topics of conversation and even to mention them would be grossly indiscreet or even insulting. Kenge became so familiar with the kind of questions I liked to ask that he would even conduct inquiries in my absence, then tell me what he had discovered about so-and-so's mother's brother's daughter. But for all his sophistication, what he liked best was to take me through the forest, as though he owned it personally, showing it to me with infinite pride.

He had insisted on working for me, and I had fired him regularly every two or three weeks, because, sophisticated or not, he was as unpredictable as any Pygmy, and just as disinclined to do anything he did not want to do. Several times he announced that he was going to get food for my supper, and I would give him the money to buy something special in the village. Of course he would go straight to the beer house and leave me to scrounge what I could. I soon learned

Jr Turnbull E-5 (1951-1954) 1962 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

to raid the Negro plantations myself, and to cut the huge banana leaves on which we used to sleep every night. On such occasions Kenge would return late, when he thought I was asleep, lie down beside me, and very soon begin to work the blanket off my back until he was comfortably covered. If I objected, he merely muttered something that I couldn't understand but that brought titters of laughter from all the other Pygmies lying around the fire. 115 • 123

When I told him he was fired, he took it as permission to take two or three days' holiday. Then one morning I would wake up to find a neatly dressed and unrepentant Kenge squatting over a smoky fire concocting an especially elaborate breakfast for the two of us. In the middle of eating breakfast, without asking me if I had had enough, he would often take the dish and pass it with a grand air to the other unmarried youths sitting hungrily around. If I protested he would simply tell me that I had eaten enough. If I said that I couldn't afford to feed all the bachelors in the camp, he would ask me how much my Leica camera had cost. Since it cost me four hundred dollars, and for four hundred dollars I could live in the Congo for four hundred weeks, there was no effective answer. Kenge knew it, and besides, he was on his own territory. I was a mere intruder.

So when I heard that Kenge had become chief bugler for the Animal Station I was both relieved and sad. I knew I had been saved a lot of headaches, but Kenge was worth them all, and more. I began to look around for someone else who could take his place. Then one morning, just a few days after I had arrived, I woke up, and there he was, a well-groomed Pygmy in buttonless shorts and shirt, a cup of coffee balanced expertly in one hand. I asked him about his bugling, and he said he was tired of having to get up so early every morning, and anyway it hurt his lips. He announced that he was going to work for me again. I told him I could not afford to pay him much, as I wanted to stay a long time and had to make my money last. Kenge looked at me in the frank, open-eyed way of the real

St Turnbull B-S (1951-1960) 1962 PO4 Pygmies PO4 Mbuti

115 Pygmy and said he didn't mind. He suggested 40 francs per week,
123 a wage considerably below what he had been earning as a bugler. He said that if I could afford a present when I left, that would be fine. Pygmies have a way of letting you know when they really mean what they say, and this was one of those times. In all the many months that followed, Kenge never once asked me for money, beyond his meager salary. And once when I was short of cash and we were down in the village he spent his own savings to buy food for the two of us.

123 In the course of my two previous trips I had come to know most of the Pygmies in this area quite well, and the initiation had cemented our friendship, though at the best I suspect they regarded me merely as a rather harmless outsider. I was soon brought up to date on all
177 that happened during the past three years. Kenge said that the hunt-
[46] ing group was still hunting and gathering, but that they sometimes
[93] came down to the village and spent time there, earning money at the Station de Chasse or at the mossi, money which they promptly spent on food, tobacco, and palm wine at the new stores. They still brought in meat for their Bak'para, or "masters," and took plantation
177 foods in return. But, encouraged by the administration, they had
241 begun to make their own plantation in the forest. This was the worst possible news; once the Pygmies have plantations their hunting-and-gathering existence is made impossible. They become tied to one place and do not have time to follow the game.

241 The two busiest workers on the plantation and those who had the
154 finest clearings were Njobo and Massi. They were two of the most
[53] influential hunters of the group. Njobo had killed two elephants
[77] single-handed, and two more in company with other Pygmies. He had three wives, but had only one child, a son by his second wife. The son, Nyange, had been a healthy lad when I had last seen him, but now he was crippled with tuberculosis of the leg bone.

156 Massi was a relative of Njobo's, and though not such a renowned

In Turnbull E-6 (1961-1968) 1962 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

THE GOOD DEATH OF BALEKIMITO

The leader of this group—although with Pygmies it is always unwise to talk of single "leaders"—was a wily but rather naive Pygmy by the name of Cephu. Most Pygmies use their real names among themselves, but they all have additional names, in KiNgwana, by which they are known to the Negroes. Cephu always used his KiNgwana name, pronounced just slightly differently from the Negro equivalent, Sefu. No matter what language they are speaking, the Pygmies always retain their own peculiar intonation, which renders the language almost incomprehensible to non-Pygmies.

Cephu's family was large, but not large enough, even with all his in-laws, to form a hunting group of his own. To do this you have to have at the very least six or seven individual families, each with its own hunting net; only in this way can you have an efficient net-hunt, with the women and children driving the animals into the long circle of nets, joined end to end. Cephu's group was usually not more than four families, and so he tacked himself onto Njobo and Ekianga. Sometimes this worked out well enough, as Pygmies are great people for visiting their relatives, and one or the other group might be depleted by absences. But at other times they would have a number of families visiting them, and then the addition of Cephu and all his relatives made the whole group far too large and unwieldy. But as he had taken the precaution of exchanging sisters, he could not be refused, and so he would make his own little camp close by connected by a narrow trail. He would follow the others wherever they went hunting and was invariably blamed when the hunt was not a success. At night he and his family kept to themselves, seldom venturing into the main camp. They sat around their own fire offended, aloof, and rather unhappy, but with hides as tough as that of a forest buffalo and impervious to the most obvious hints and thinly veiled insults. But Cephu was the best storyteller in the forest.

Kenge's position in the group was an undefined and rather happy one. His father had married a sister of Njobo and joined his wife's,

Jo Tunnicliffe B-O (1931-1958) 1962 PO4 Pygmies PO4 Mbuti

group, as often happens. But Kenge was his son by another wife, from a totally unrelated group. By Njobo's sister his father had one daughter, and she was Kenge's only real blood relative in the whole group. This was important, as it enabled him to flirt with almost any of the other girls, with the added spice of its being thought incestuous, because they belonged to his group even though they were totally unrelated.

Since I had been with them before, the group had changed slightly, with a few additions and subtractions. At their suggestion I decided to build my own house in their village camp. It looked as if we were in for a long spell in the village. The camp was in a strategic position between the village of the workers of the road and Station de Chasse and that of Camp Putnam, near the stores and the base house, and—even more important—near all the surrounding plantations. Progressive old Tongwe said that it was a good site because tourists could drive close by and take their photographs and give them money. Manyalibo, in his dry way, said the only good thing about it was that it was close to the plantations so he didn't have to go far to steal his food. The youngsters liked it because it was near the houses of Negro villagers, where they could go begging for cigarettes, old clothes, and palm wine.

It looked, in fact, as if these Pygmies had become as professional as those that line the roadside at Beni, on the edge of the forest, selling their services to tourists, letting themselves be photographed doing things they would never do in the forest, wearing clothes they wouldn't wear except in a village, even selling the tourist weapons used only by Negroes. But Moke reassured me. His face wrinkled up in smiles, and in his soft, toothless voice he told me not to worry, that we would all be back in the forest long before my house was finished. "That is where we belong," he said, "and we shall return soon. We cannot refuse the forest." He was right, but it was in

N Turnbull B-S (1951-1954) 1962 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

other wives, and they left without saying a word to him. As Kamaikan squatted over the fire, fanning it until it glowed red, I saw that she was pregnant, and I gathered from the look she cast after her two co-wives that her condition was the cause of some jealousy in the household.

Kenge delayed leaving, finding one excuse after another, until the sun was up. He then admitted that he had thought it silly to leave so early, when the forest was still wet and cold. He disappeared for an hour after that, and when he returned he was carrying a sleeping mat he had scrounged from a Negro (Pygmies generally sleep on leaves or sticks), a large bunch of plantains, and a cake of scented soap. He decided he could not carry my bundle as well as these things, so he told me I would have to carry my own. Anyway, he said, he wanted to leave his hands as free as possible in case he saw a bird or monkey he could shoot for dinner. He pulled the string of his bow and let it go with a loud twang, shooting an arm out in the direction the arrow would have gone, pointing to a tree top where a black-and-white Colobus monkey, idly scratching its stomach, stared down at the scene below. I heard later that Kenge considered himself above acting as a porter; he apparently thought of that as a job fit only for people of the village, not people of the forest. Any self-respecting Pygmy carries his own load and no one else's.

When the sun was above the trees and the birds were singing and the village hall empty, we crossed the road and walked through the Negro settlement, stopping for a quick last drink of palm wine, for no such luxuries are to be had in the forest. There were six of us in all: five Pygmy youths and myself.

The palm wine finished, they set off through the Negro plantations at such a pace that I almost had to run to keep up. At the edge of the plantations the forest was thick and matted, and the path entering it was narrow. The ground was still rough where saplings had been hacked off just above ground level, and on either side was

St Turnbull B-0 (1951-1959) 1962 PO4 Pygmies PO4 Mbuti

THE MAKING OF CAMP LELO

BaNgwana are the most disliked of all the neighbouring Negro tribes, and among the Pygmies they are derided particularly because of their slow, ungainly gait, and as being the least able to walk in the forest as you should be able to walk—swiftly, silently, and easily.

Kenge was full of surprises. In spite of the apparent sophistication evidenced by his attachment to Western clothes and scented soap, he still knew his way about the forest better than most Pygmies, and he certainly had a sharper eye for game. We stopped several times while he and another youth stalked carefully up to a tree where they had seen something. Each time they shot their arrows and stood poised on the balls of their feet, silent and motionless, only to relax and clap their hands in disgust and shake their heads as they explained to each other why they had missed. And each time all I could see of the bird or monkey was a shaking of the branches as it fled in fright.

After about two hours we came to Apa Kadikeru—the Camp of Kadikeru. Nobody was sure who or what Kadikeru was, but that was what the spot had always been called. This was where I had first lived in a Pygmy camp, and it was strange to pass through the same place now. There was not a sign of a hut; just the faintest outline of what had been a campsite and a slight tangle of undergrowth showing that some clearing had once been done. Kadikeru was not quite halfway to the Lelo River, and we stopped there for a few minutes to have a smoke.

But even while we were resting, squatting on our bundles, Kenge and his friends were looking around. Before we left they made a quick foraging expedition and returned in as much time as it took me to hitch up my bundle and try to find some way of fastening the tump line so that it relieved my aching shoulders. A typewriter and a load of paper and notebooks wrapped up inside a thick blanket made the load awkward and heavy. Each of my companions had handfuls of mushrooms, great fluffy pink things, fresh and firm.

Kenge uses a hunting bow as a musical instrument.
[P.72-E]

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

pulled across the entrances to the little huts, and only the men were left outside.

Njobo was there to greet us, and the first thing he asked was whether I had been able to keep up with the others, or if I had "walked like the BaNgwana." He then turned to the others with an obvious "I told you so" air and said, "You see, it is all right; he knows how to walk." This apparently slight compliment was in fact a very real one, because to the Pygmy it is one of the most important differences between the people of the forest and the people of the village that the latter do *not* know "how to walk." Walking, to the Pygmy, means being able to run swiftly and silently, without slipping, tripping or falling. Every day he depends for his food on his ability to "walk," and more than once his life will be saved by the same ability, when he has to run from a charging buffalo or creep away unnoticed from a sleeping leopard.

Masisi, unbelieving, asked if I had not fallen at least once, and when he was told I had, he roared with laughter. Masimongo, who had been another to object to my going, pointed to my torn clothes, dripping with water and perspiration, and filthy where I had fallen, and he too laughed. Nobody mentioned the molimo.

Kenge came up and asked disapprovingly why I had gone off so quickly without telling him. He said he had cooked dinner and now it was all cold and I would have to go without. He gave my clothes a withering look and said he would wash them out the next day, and that I had better take them off now and get dry. I went over to my hut and changed, and when I came out he had a piping hot meal waiting by a blazing fire.

What followed that evening was to follow every evening for the next two months. It was the focal point of the molimo festival, and the repetition every night was an essential part of it. The ceremony, if you can call it that, did not center around ritual objects, as do the

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

765 882 534 533 growled and bellowed, and it rampaged around the camp, overturning any of the crude chairs that had been left outside, scattering the remains of fires in all directions, and beating on the roofs of huts to wake everyone up. Sometimes the youths seemed to divide at random into two sides and have a sort of tug of war with the trumpet, some trying to lead it in one direction, some in the other. It was not a real contest of strength, only acting. I wondered if perhaps this represented the original struggle for possession of the molimo, a struggle which some say was between Pygmies and animals, or others say was between men and women.

765 688 536 Ekianga took a prominent part in these morning affrays. He used to lead the youths, always holding two spears, one under each arm, pointing down at the ground as though he were looking for any sleeping person who should have been taking part in the activity. Sometimes he acted it out, stopping as though he saw an offender. Then he danced about and finally jabbed the spear blades at the earth.

765 688 183 115 123 I said to Kenge that this was what would happen to him if he went off and took my bed and blanket again before the evening singing had finished. Kenge laughed loudly and shouted across the camp what I had said. But then he became serious and said that he had been singing all the time until Moke had first said he wanted to go to sleep. "When the old men want to sleep it is all right for us to sleep," he said. Then he added laconically, "And of course if we are tired it is all right for us to go to sleep, naturally." He thought the conversation not very interesting, so he gave an animal call and ran with great leaps and bounds, like the antelope he was named for, across the camp to join in the tug of war.

765 578 If anyone had given offense the previous day, usually by being too argumentative, the youths in the morning rampage paid particular attention to the offender's hut. Cephu's camp of course came in for the most attention, and although Cephu complained loudly

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

more than a hundred feet up. "That is where it sleeps," he said. "It is safe there. It sleeps there until it is needed."

I asked when it was needed, but Maipe had said all he was going to say. He looked up at the tree for a last time, then motioned with his head that we should be on our way. Kenge whispered to me that when we got back he would ask Moke to tell me more. It was better for old men to talk about these things.

That same night, just before the singing started, Moke was sitting outside his hut, whittling away at a new bow he was making, and talking to himself because there was nobody else for him to talk to. Kenge had spoken to him when we got back to the camp at dusk, but I did not expect anything to come of it, and Kenge had said nothing to me. Moke looked up and stared in my direction, then he looked back at his bow and continued whittling away with a rough stone. But he spoke a little louder, so that I would hear.

"Ebamunyama," he said, using the name I had been given, "*pi-ka'i to.*" ("Come here.")

He spoke as if he was addressing the bow, and when I got to him he still did not look up but just told me to sit down. Talking to the bow in his soft old voice, he said that he had been told I was asking about the molimo, and that this was a good thing and he would tell me whatever he could.

He went on to tell that the Pygmies call out their molimo whenever things seem to be going wrong. "It may be that the hunting is bad," he said, "or that someone is ill, or, as now, that someone has died. These are not good things, and we like things to be good. So we call out the molimo and it makes them good, as they should be."

Kind, quiet old Moke, all alone and without a wife to look after him, still working away at his bow, occasionally looking along the shank to make sure he was keeping the line true—he told me many things that evening. But, most important, he told me, or rather

115 But, most important, he told me, or rather
778 showed me, how the Pygmies believe in the goodness of the forest.
182 "The forest is a father and mother to us," he said, "and like a
181 father or mother it gives us everything we need—food, clothing, shelter, warmth . . . and affection. Normally everything goes well, because the forest is good to its children, but when things go wrong there must be a reason."

I wondered what he would say now, because I knew that the village people, in times of crisis, believe that they have been cursed either by some evil spirit or by a witch or sorcerer. But not the Pygmies; their logic is simpler and their faith stronger, because their world is kinder.

Moke showed me this when he said, "Normally everything goes well in our world. But at night when we are sleeping, sometimes things go wrong, because we are not awake to stop them from going
[136] wrong. Army ants invade the camp; leopards may come in and steal a hunting dog or even a child. If we were awake these things would not happen. So when something big goes wrong, like illness or bad hunting or death, it must be because the forest is sleeping and not
[533] looking after its children. So what do we do? We wake it up. We wake it up by singing to it, and we do this because we want it to awaken happy. Then everything will be well and good again. So when our world is going well then also we sing to the forest because we want it to share our happiness."

115 All this I had heard before, but I had not realized quite so clearly
778 that this was what the molimo was all about. It was as though the
776 nightly chorus were an intimate communion between a people and
781 their god, the forest. Moke even talked about this, but when he did
182 so he stopped working on his bow and turned his wrinkled old face to stare at me with his deep, brown, smiling eyes. He told me how all Pygmies have different names for their god, but how they all know that it is really the same one. Just what it is, of course, they don't know, and that is why the name really does not matter very

1 A [i.e. Moke - analyst]

much. "How can we know?" he asked. "We can't see him; perhaps only when we die will we know and then we can't tell anyone. So how can we say what he is like or what his name is? But he must be good to give us so many things. He must be of the forest. So when we sing, we sing to the forest."

The complete faith of the Pygmies in the goodness of their forest world is perhaps best of all expressed in one of their great molimo songs, one of the songs that is sung fully only when someone has died. At no time do their songs ask for this or that to be done, for the hunt to be made better or for someone's illness to be cured; it is not necessary. All that is needful is to awaken the forest, and everything will come right. But suppose it does not, suppose that someone dies, then what? Then the men sit around their evening fire, as I had been doing with them for the past month, and they sing songs of devotion, songs of praise, to wake up the forest and rejoice it, to make it happy again. Of the disaster that has befallen them they sing, in this one great song, "There is darkness all around us; but if darkness *is*, and the darkness is of the forest, then the darkness must be good."

As Moke looked at me and spoke I wondered if this was how he had once explained things to his own son. Now I began to understand what happened at night when fifteen feet of drainpipe was carried into the camp and someone blew or sang into it; and I began to understand what the "presence" was—it was surely the presence of the Forest itself, in all its beauty and goodness.

Moke turned back to his bow and began whittling again.

"You will soon see things of which you have never heard, and which you have never seen. Then you will understand things that I can never tell you. But you must stay awake—you may see them only once."

He started humming to himself, and I left.

3: Tumbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

I asked Kenge if he would like to come with me and was not surprised when he packed off Maliamo to stay with his mother. Nothing would have stopped Kenge from making our projected tour of the forest. We decided to circle the area by following the road around the fringes, stopping wherever it seemed expedient and setting off by foot. I took a supply of notebooks and pencils, a typewriter, and a couple of changes of clothes. Kenge not only brought two changes of clothes, specially purchased at the local stores for the occasion, but also a huge old charcoal-heated flatiron. He said that we would probably be going through large cities and meeting big people, and he wanted to show them that we were not savages.

Our first stop was the headquarters of the BaNdaka chief, at the village of Bafwakoa. It was a comfortable day's drive, and we arrived late in the afternoon, having stopped at almost every village on the way. The news of our coming had gone before us, in the strange way that news travels in Africa, from village to village. When we reached Bafwakoa, Chief Kachui was sitting out on his veranda waiting to greet us, surrounded by his official advisers and some of his family.

Kachui was an old man, and a leper, and he knew enough of Europeans not to offer to shake hands with strangers. But we had met several times before, and he clasped both my hands warmly in his and made me sit down beside him. I introduced Kenge as a friend, and with great aplomb the powerful old man called for another chair to be brought. This was the first time, I am sure, that such an honor had been done a Pygmy by this severe and conventional chief. We talked a long while. I made it quite plain that he could talk freely in front of Kenge, and he did so. He said that he "owned" several hundred Pygmies, and they were really more trouble than they were worth. "Here it is, time for the cotton crop to be brought in, and still I can not get the Pygmies to come back from the forest. They say the hunting is too good, but if it is, then why do I get no meat?

What shall I say when the administrator comes and finds the cotton is not ready?"

I suggested that he could send one of his sons into the forest after the Pygmies, guessing what the answer would be, if Pygmies here were like Pygmies at Epulu. And sure enough Kachui shook his head and said he had sent three sons after his Pygmies, but each time when they reached the hunting camp it was deserted, and nobody seemed to know where they had gone. Kenge shook his head and I was afraid he was going to laugh. But he merely said what a terrible way that was to behave, and that everyone knew that Pygmies should always do what their master told them. This surprised Kachui, and he warmed to his theme, telling of all the ways in which he was constantly being tricked and cheated and robbed by the Ba-Mbuti. Kenge continued to look disapproving, clucking his tongue and nodding in agreement whenever Kachui said he would be justified in putting every last Pygmy in jail—when he could find them.

But Kenge proved to be more than diplomatic. In turn he began questioning Kachui and showed that over the past year he had come to know just the kinds of topics I liked to hear discussed. The fact that he raised the subjects dispelled all suspicions that Kachui might have had, and he even told us the exact whereabouts of such Pygmies as he knew he could find for us, most of whom were tending his illegal plantations. He offered to call them in if we wanted to question them, but we said no, we would rather go and visit them. After some hesitation Kachui agreed, and made arrangements for us to leave the next morning. He installed us in his official guest house and sent over one of his sons with gifts of food. He also sent over two of his daughters, and I was tempted to find out whether they were both intended for me, or whether one was for Kenge. But I merely gave them a small gift apiece and said we were tired and were going to sleep. Kenge was thoroughly disgusted and assured me that they did not have leprosy. I had a hard time trying to convince him that

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

this was not the point, and he finally just rolled over in his blanket, muttering that sometimes he thought Europeans were as crazy as villagers.

For the next few days we visited Kachui's plantations and talked with such Pygmies as we found there. But it was impossible to shake off the chief's sons, who stuck to us like leeches. As a result I could get no response at all; everything that the Pygmies said was said to impress the villagers. The only useful information was obtained by Kenge, who got into the habit of slipping away while I was "holding court," as he called it, and talking to his fellow Pygmies well out of earshot.

One thing was plain, however, and that was that no matter how powerful Kachui was—and it was certainly within his power to have any Pygmies put in jail and flogged—he was no match for the people of the forest. Kenge learned that the main group had been away for over six months and had no intention of returning yet. They were a long way off and came close to the village only when they wanted to raid the plantations. Even while we were there Kachui's sons tried to find out where the rest of the Pygmies were, but everyone protested complete ignorance.

A few days at Bafwakoa were more than enough. With Kachui lying in wait the Pygmies were not likely to tell us where their companions were, and even if they did Kachui was not likely to let us out of sight. He became un-co-operative when I asked to look at the tribunal records, for which I had official permission. He was forced into admitting that he did not consider the Pygmies real people, and therefore they had no right to have cases tried in the tribunal. He said that any complaints by the villagers against Pygmies were heard by him; he judged them himself and no records were kept. He made it quite plain that the judgment always went in favor of the villager. Kenge then disgraced himself by asking what happened if a Pygmy brought a complaint against a villager. Kachui